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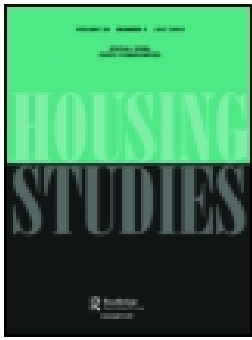
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Homelessness and social control: a typology

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ABSTRACT

The use of 'social control' interventions in housing and welfare policy often courts intense controversy, and never more so than when attempts are made to bring about change in the conduct of street homeless people. To date, academic scrutiny has focused on the so-called 'regulation' or 'criminalisation' of rough sleepers occupying public space, but a range of 'softer' control mechanisms are also now in evidence within homelessness support services. This paper explicates the relationship between the distinct forms of social control that have been used in this field – force, coercion, bargaining, influence and tolerance – and compares the perspectives of policy makers, frontline practitioners and homeless people regarding the appropriateness of their deployment in England. It emphasizes that the use of every one of these modes of social control, and indeed the absence of such controls, raises moral and practical dilemmas, the nuance of which is often unacknowledged in academic accounts.

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Introduction

The use of 'social control', that is, measures which seek to mould the behaviour of targeted individuals, often courts controversy in housing and welfare policy interventions (Dean, 1991; Harrison & Sanders, 2016; Jones *et al.*, 2013). This is especially evident as regards responses to street homelessness, given the highly visible vulnerability of the people affected (Johnsen *et al.*, under review). Much of the literature on this subject focuses on the so-called 'regulation' or 'criminalisation' of street populations which employ some combination of legal prohibitions on specific activities in public spaces (for example lying down, performing ablutions or storing personal belongings), the use of 'defensive architecture' to make the built environment less conducive to 'undesirable' activities, and/or the surveillance and policing of targeted areas (Doherty *et al.*, 2008; Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2010).

Whilst the scale and nature of implementation is variable within and between countries (O'Sullivan, 2012), such strategies have been widely documented in North America (Evans, 2012; Gaetz, 2013; NLCHP, 2014; Walby & Lippert, 2012), Central America (Godoy, 2012), Europe (Doherty *et al.*, 2008; FEANTSA, 2007, 2012; Fernandez Evangelista, 2013) and

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Australasia (Adams, 2014; Laurenson & Collins, 2007; Pennay *et al.*, 2014). In the USA, these interventions are so commonplace that the National Coalition for the Homeless developed and published a list of the ten ‘meanest’ cities based on the number and severity of ordinances affecting street homeless people, amongst other criteria¹ (NCH, 2006). There is a general consensus that the regulation of street populations in Europe has on balance been less pervasive and less punitive (Tosi, 2007; Von Mahs, 2013), albeit that Hungary became the first country in the world to encode the possibility of penalizing homelessness in its constitution in 2013 (Bence & Udvarhelyi, 2013; Udvarhelyi, 2014). In parallel, a separate (though to date much less voluminous) academic literature has developed on the use of social control interventions by homelessness support services which make eligibility for help conditional on compliance with, for example, requirements regarding addiction treatment, meeting attendance or work search (Evans, 2011; Markee, 2009).

The rhetoric associated with the ‘criminalisation’ debate in particular is often strongly condemnatory in tone, with some commentators perceiving social control measures to be symptomatic of ‘cruel’ or ‘revanchist’ self-interest on the part of the urban bourgeoisie and middle classes (Andreou, 2015; Atkinson & While, 2015; Davis, 2006; Mitchell, 2001, 2003; Smith, 1996). Likewise, a number of scholars have drawn normative distinctions between the ostensibly ‘caring’ approach of ‘low threshold’ services on the one hand, and the apparently ‘callous’ approach of services that deploy more ‘conditional’ techniques (see for example Bowpitt *et al.*, 2013; Cloke *et al.*, 2010; Evans, 2011; Fopp, 2002; Scanlon & Adlam, 2008). Studies illuminating compassionate or ambivalent motives underpinning both types of initiatives go some way to problematizing these accounts (see for example Deverteuil *et al.*, 2009; Forrest, 2014; Hansen Lofstrand, 2015; Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2010; Laurenson & Collins, 2007; Murphy, 2009; Scullion *et al.*, 2015), but negative portrayals of the use of social control in this field nevertheless predominate.

This partisan style of discourse, with its abundant pejorative overtones, makes it difficult to assess critically the aims, impact and legitimacy (or otherwise) of interventions employing social control. Moreover, many of the key terms employed (such as ‘criminalisation’, ‘penalisation’, ‘coercion’ and ‘control’) are imprecisely defined and often used interchangeably to refer to a very broad range of activities and policies (see for example FEANTSA, 2012; Fernandez Evangelista, 2013; O’Grady *et al.*, 2011), with the result that the specific character of the relevant incentives, sanctions or other techniques are rarely fully, or fairly, elucidated.

This paper proposes a social control typology which seeks to conceptualize the full gamut of responses to street homelessness, distinguishing between five ‘modes of power’ that may be used in attempts to alter homeless individuals’ behaviour. Drawing on extensive qualitative data from England, the perspectives of practitioners and homeless people are brought to bear on the practical and moral conundrums associated with the use of ‘force’, ‘coercion’, ‘bargaining’, ‘influence’ and ‘tolerance’ in this field.

Rather than seeking a definitive conclusion on the ethicality of these approaches (instead see Watts *et al.* (2017) for a relevant normative analysis), we aim here to give voice to the experiences of those closest to the realities, and ambiguities, of control measures aimed at tackling rough sleeping and associated activities. England provides a particularly appropriate context within which to explore these perspectives and complexities given that, from the 1990s onwards, sharply increased levels of social control have been apparent in attempts to combat what Government has branded an ‘anti-social street scene’, associated with activities such as begging and street drinking (Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2007). Moreover, and in concert

with a broader ‘responsibilisation’ agenda aimed at ‘welfare recipients’ as a whole (Clarke, 2005), eligibility for support from homelessness service providers has become more explicitly tied to compliance with conduct-related conditions and ‘engagement’ with the help on offer (Dobson, 2011). In the most recent period, however, there has been something of a nascent swing back towards less conditional interventions for the subgroup with the most severe substance misuse and/or mental health problems (CLG, 2015; Terry & Cardwell, 2015).

In this paper we hope to demonstrate the applicability of the proposed power-based typology in understanding these nuances and policy cross-currents in the homelessness field, and in so doing provide a navigational tool to help clarify areas of agreement and dispute between those taking opposed stances in this heated debate. In offering a comprehensive conceptualization of social control mechanisms targeting street homeless people, we draw upon (but do not rehearse in detail) the findings of previous evaluations of some of the specific interventions discussed herein (e.g. Bowpitt *et al.*, 2013; Brown, 2013; Bretherton and Pleace, 2015; Hough *et al.*, 2011; Johnsen, 2013; Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2007, 2010; Johnsen & Jones, 2015; Lane & Power, 2009; Randall & Brown, 2002; Sanders & Albanese, 2017; Teixeira, 2010; Watts *et al.*, 2017).

Data source

The analysis presented draws upon a major UK-based five year programme of research, entitled *Welfare Conditionality: Sanctions, Support and Behaviour Change*, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, to create an interdisciplinary focal point for research on the efficacy and ethicality of conditionality across a range of social policy fields. Fieldwork included national-level key informant interviews, focus groups with frontline welfare practitioners, and qualitative longitudinal research with 480 welfare service users interviewed over three waves of fieldwork. The latter were recruited in nine case study areas across England and Scotland, these being urban centres with significant numbers of welfare recipients located in a range of geographically diverse contexts.² This paper focuses on data from the main English case study sites (London, Bristol, Sheffield and Peterborough), as the social control interventions discussed above were seldom employed in Scotland.

The specific data sources utilized here include: interviews with national level stakeholders including government policy-makers, umbrella bodies and campaigning/service provider agencies ($n = 9$); focus groups with frontline practitioners involved in street outreach, emergency accommodation and community safety ($n = 6$, involving a total of $n = 27$ individuals); and the wave one interviews with (current or former) homeless people ($n = 55$). The latter were purposively sampled on grounds of having recent experience of relevant social control interventions and were recruited via specialist support agencies including hostels, day centres, soup kitchens and street outreach services. The sample was deliberately weighted towards London where half of ($n = 28$) participants were recruited, given the capital’s status as the epicentre of rough sleeping in the UK (Fitzpatrick *et al.*, 2017) and track record of policy responses containing ‘hard’ forms of social control (Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2007). Note, however, that this paper focuses on the broad-based conceptual lessons that emerged from across all four of these sites rather than seeking to describe in detail variations in practice between them.

Homeless interviewees included 40 men and 15 women, the majority ($n = 39$) of whom were aged 25–49 years, with three aged 18–24, 12 aged 50–64, and one over 65 ($n = 1$ no age specified). At the point of wave one interview, more than one quarter ($n = 16$) were sleeping rough, nearly half ($n = 24$) were living in homeless hostel accommodation, four were staying with friends or relatives ('sofa surfing'), and 10 had recently moved into a rental tenancy. All had experience of sleeping, begging and/or drinking on the streets and are thus sometimes referred to below as members of the 'street population', a term widely used in English policy circles (e.g. St Mungos, 2017). Practitioner focus groups were held in a subset ($n = 6$) of the agencies from which the homeless interviewees were recruited. Verbatim transcripts were analysed thematically with the aid of qualitative data analysis software.

Modes of power

Social control refers to the organized ways in which society deploys various modes of power in responding to behaviour and/or people it regards as in some way problematic, spanning criminal justice responses to the enforcement of norms via social interactions involving praise or blame (Cohen, 1985). It has long been used as a lens through which to understand social and welfare policies by those arguing that welfare systems are 'mechanisms of manipulation', as well as (or indeed instead of) 'humanitarian enterprises' (Higgins, 1980, see also Dean, 1991; Harrison & Sanders, 2016). Various distinctions between kinds of social control have been made in sociology, including between formal (legal) and informal (social) forms of control and between direct (enforced by sanctions), indirect (secured via relationships) and internal (secured by socialization into norms) forms of control (see Chriss, 2007). The typology presented here draws on work by Bachrach & Baratz (1963), Lukes (2005) and Grant (2006), spanning political science, sociology and philosophy and focusing on social control's closely allied concept of 'power'.

Each of these authors distinguish between various 'modes of power' that can be employed to secure behaviour change and, though the details of their conceptual typologies differ, they share a focus on distinguishing between 'harder' and 'softer' modes of power, ranging from 'force' and 'coercion' (which either remove the opportunity for non-compliance or threaten substantial sanction), to 'influence' which seeks to secure compliance via persuasion or bargaining. The typology summarized in Table 1 integrates their approaches, and is tailored to be of maximum utility in framing a discussion of social control measures employed in relation to homelessness. It retains the more finely grained distinctions made by Bachrach & Baratz (1963) and Lukes (2005), but also incorporate the insights of Grant (2006), particularly concerning 'bargaining' as a form of power, developed in her work interrogating the ethics of incentives. 'Tolerance', a category that does not feature in the work of any of these authors, is included here to allow an exploration of responses to homelessness that do not actively seek to change behaviour. Each of these specified modes of power is defined below, before being concretised via reference to practical examples from the English homelessness policy context, and views regarding its deployment explored from the perspective of national stakeholders, frontline practitioners and service users.

As will become apparent over the course of this paper, this typology is not intended to denote a continuum from least to most legitimate modes of power (Watts *et al.*, 2017) or a simple 'ethical ordering' wherein 'softer' forms of social control are necessarily seen as less problematic than 'harder' ones (see Grant, 2006). On the contrary, it is intended to

Table 1. Social control typology.

Mode of power		Definition	Examples
Force	Removes possibility of non-compliance		Enforced administrative removal
			Arrest, imprisonment
			Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO)/Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO)
			Designated Public Places Order (DPPO)
Coercion	Secures behaviour change via the threat of 'deprivations'		Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)
			Dispersal Order
			Some forms of 'defensive architecture'
			Single Service Offer (SSO)
Bargaining	Incentivizes behaviour change via the use/promise of an exchange of gains or losses		Personalized budget
Influence	Promotes behaviour change via <i>persuasion</i> (use of speech or other symbols) or 'nudge' (modification of 'framing' of a decision) to shape beliefs and behaviours		Assertive outreach
			Motivational interviewing
			Anti-begging campaign
Tolerance	No active/deliberate attempt made to promote behaviour change		Some forms of 'defensive architecture'
			Traditional/low threshold night shelters, soup kitchens, soup runs, (some) day centres

explicate a set of conceptually discrete, albeit sometimes in practice overlapping, forms of social control wherein each displays its own specific complexities and dilemmas.

Force

Force achieves behaviour change by ‘stripping [the person targeted] of the choice between compliance and non-compliance’ (Lukes, 2005, p. 22; see also Bachrach & Baratz, 1963). The most obvious manifestations in street homelessness policy are enforced physical removal, arrests and imprisonment. The kind of enforced (and sometimes violent) relocation of rough sleepers reported in some international contexts (Doherty *et al.*, 2008; Godoy, 2012) have not been documented in England, albeit that from May 2016 the UK Border Authority began to administratively remove EEA nationals who were found sleeping rough and forcibly return them to their country of origin (Home Office, 2016).³

Powers of arrest and fines under the Vagrancy Act 1824, however, apply to all rough sleepers regardless of nationality. Still employed in England, it specifies that begging is an arrestable offence, as is rough sleeping, albeit the latter only when an individual is directed to a ‘free place of shelter’ and fails to take this up (Murdie, 2010). Neither offence is imprisonable: the maximum penalty is a fine. Newer measures such as the Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) and its successor the Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO), however, introduce the potential of imprisonment. These orders, introduced by the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act and Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 respectively, are intended to protect the public from behaviour that causes or is likely to cause ‘harassment, alarm or distress’. A breach of conditions attached to an ASBO or CBO (such as prohibitions on begging or street drinking, or occupying defined areas) is a criminal offence with a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment (Home Office, 2014a), albeit that sentences tend to be much shorter in practice (Home Office, 2014b).

Interviews with national stakeholders and frontline practitioners reveal that there has been an increasing (but by no mean unanimous) consensus amongst service providers in recent years that the use of arrests and ASBOs is justified when a street homeless person’s actions are having a clear detrimental impact on other people:

I think people who are living on the streets and using drugs are posing major risks, and not just to themselves but to the public, so there has to be a response to that ... You do have a public health hazard, needles and works and so on, being left in doorways which is something we do have to address. (Senior representative, national homelessness organisation)

If there’s a view that the person’s not accepting any of the support and is carrying on regardless, and their behaviour is causing the community some kind of problems, that’s when [we’ll] be looking to ... legal routes, enforcement routes, to stop people’s behaviour. (Frontline practitioner, homelessness organisation)

Unfortunately the reality is that when people drink in the way that most people drink on the street - not all of them ... it often leads to people not feeling safe ... They can be verbally aggressive, physically aggressive ... I think people are right not to want that on their doorstep. (Frontline practitioner, homelessness organisation)

At the same time, practitioners generally agree that these forms of force should only be used as a last resort after supportive interventions have been exhausted, especially if severe penalties are involved (Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2007; Sanders & Albanese, 2017). Consequently,

many national stakeholder and service provider interviewees expressed concern about the limited availability or poor quality of support offered in some cases:

Enforcement is a necessary and potentially useful tool providing that the exit offer is there ... but my hunch is that the exit offer is not fully complete yet. One of the areas that I have most concern about is actually if somebody said, 'Yes, I would like to come off the street' ... and the offer is incredibly limited. (Senior representative, national homelessness organisation)

It's important to have ... a multi-professional meeting, a best-interest meeting ... in the lead-up to any enforcement action ... It hasn't always happened, and when it doesn't happen things don't go well. When it does happen, it can all be really effective and there can be a positive result at the end. (Frontline practitioner, homelessness organisation)

Homeless interviewees also typically supported the use of force when someone's behaviour was having a tangible negative impact on other people (see also Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2007):

[Use of force is] fair enough if there are gangs of people, because you do get some really dirty horrible people who are peeing and crapping and God knows what everywhere and leaving litter and everything. (Homeless person, male, 43)

I have seen people [begging] that can be really intimidating, right up in people's faces, hands on them and won't leave them alone ... and I feel they should be ... told to stop what they're doing. (Homeless person, male, 40)

Opinion is rather more divided amongst service providers and homeless people alike regarding the question of whether force is justified when an individual is *not* having a discernible negative impact on others. While all interviewees agreed that rough sleepers should be forcibly removed from the street if their health has become so poor that their life is at imminent risk, some argued that force should not be used other than in these emergency situations given the risk that it might displace the problem or distance them from support (see also Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2007):

We'll not always report a site ... to get it cleared. Because they're out of the way, they're safe, they're warm, they're dry ... they're not causing a nuisance to anybody. (Frontline practitioner, homelessness organisation)

As long as they're not causing a nuisance or leaving empty cans or drinking or shouting and screaming, what harm are they doing? Just laid there sleeping? (Homeless person, female, 59)

Others feel that it may be appropriate to employ force in a broader range of circumstances in order to safeguard that individual's well-being, given the evidenced links between street homelessness, extreme ill health and premature death (see Morrison, 2009; O'Connell, 2005; Thomas, 2012):

Some people look back on ... cardboard cities ... fondly, but I don't. I don't think they were lovely places to live, they were exploitative, very miserable. Living in a cardboard box ... is not what I'd wish for anybody ... So by way of wanting better for people, enforcement is part of that. (Senior representative, national homelessness organisation)

Perhaps hassling some people helps them ... Making them ... Otherwise they might hit rock bottom before they are ready to get off the street. (Homeless person, male, 36)

While not quite as clear cut, alcohol bans or byelaws such as Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs), widely used to prevent street drinking, might also be classified as forceful. Although it is not an offence to consume alcohol within a designated area, police officers can require a person drinking to stop and may confiscate the alcohol of anyone who is drinking or who they believe intends to do so. Individuals refusing to comply can be arrested and fined. Non-compliance is not an imprisonable offence, but persistent non-payment of fines

can lead to incarceration (Home Office, 2009). In some towns and cities, these measures have been superseded by Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs), wherein perpetrators of locally-defined 'anti-social' activities – which in some local authority jurisdictions include rough sleeping – may be fined up to £1,000 (Home Office, 2014a). In addition, the police may use Dispersal Orders to require groups in designated areas, such as street drinking 'schools' or individuals congregating in rough sleeping 'hot-spots', to disperse; refusal to comply is a criminal offence (Crawford & Lister, 2007).

Service provider and homeless interviewees alike acknowledged that these byelaws and orders may deter some members of the street population from street culture activities. More commonly, however, they highlighted the risk of displacement, especially if supportive interventions were insufficiently integrated. Homeless interviewees especially resented the tendency for such tools to be deployed in a discriminatory manner:

I've been fined for drinking in certain places where there is a no-drinking zone, right? ... I'm normally having arguments with the police and I just tell them where to go ... Sometimes they might just take the can off you and tip it down the drain ... When it happens I just go to the shop and just get another drink five minutes along the street. (Homeless person, male, 42)

It's seriously hypocritical. People like myself and other miscreants, if you will, if we drink on the street the police will come over and give us some serious bullshit and maybe ... arrest us ... Come the weekend people come and they're walking up and down the street drinking and the police don't say anything to them. (Homeless person, male, 66)

Finally, and perhaps less obviously, some forms of so-called 'defensive' or 'hostile' architecture (Atkinson & While, 2015; Petty, 2016) might also be said to represent the utilization of force. Specifically, the gating off of doorways, alleys or other spaces used by members of the street population renders them inaccessible, thus removing entirely the possibility of non-compliance, in that particular location at least.⁴ Service provider and homeless interviewees' strength of feeling was notably less intense with regard to the use of defensive architecture than was the case in respect of ASBOs and arrests. Most commonly these measures were simply considered ineffective, in that they straightforwardly displaced rough sleeping or other activities from one location to another:

It doesn't stop you from drinking, you know what I mean, because you'll always find somewhere to go and have a drink if you want a drink. (Homeless person, male, 43)

There's a tunnel and I used to sleep under there ... And they put a gate up. I went back that night, I couldn't even get in there ... I just went and found somewhere else to sleep. (Homeless person, female, 59)

Coercion

Coercion seeks to secure desirable behaviour change by employing the threat of 'deprivation' (Lukes, 2005) of goods – such as liberty (to this extent there is some overlap with 'force'), money, material resources and/or services, and self-esteem or positive regard from other people (Chriss, 2007). The more extreme the penalty for failure to conform to the required conduct, the more coercive might the intervention be considered to be.

While in the realm of social security the archetypal form of coercion is benefit sanctions (Watts *et al.*, 2014), in the homelessness field the key example is that of making access to support services contingent on certain kinds of conduct. The clearest illustration of this in England has been the advent of the 'single service offer' (SSO) which comprises a core

component of the No Second Night Out (NSNO) initiative, piloted in London in 2011 as part of a commitment to end rough sleeping in the capital and subsequently rolled out nationally (Homeless Link, 2014; Hough *et al.*, 2011) albeit in variant forms (Johnsen & Jones, 2015). NSNO was initially intended to target ‘new’ rough sleepers, that is, people who do not have a known history of street homelessness, but in practice NSNO staff have often found themselves supporting individuals with long experience of homelessness (Hough *et al.*, 2011). After being assessed in a NSNO ‘hub’, rough sleepers are provided with a support plan (the SSO), which is recorded on a shared information system used by a range of statutory-funded partner agencies. For people who have no recognized ‘local connection’ to the area they are sleeping in, the SSO may comprise an attempt to ‘reconnect’ them to somewhere they have previously lived or used services (Johnsen & Jones, 2015). Refusal to adhere renders rough sleepers ineligible for support from any (statutory funded) partner agency within the local authority jurisdiction (Hough *et al.*, 2011).

Given the potentially dire consequences for those left on the streets with little if any assistance, SSOs may be considered to represent a fairly extreme form of coercion. The following comments reflect widely held reservations about SSOs amongst service provider interviewees:

It’s a good idea in principle, I think. The difficulty is that we know that if that single service offer is not accepted, it then becomes a standoff ... What’s the next stage? They’re effectively back on the streets. (Senior representative, national homelessness organisation)

I am conflicted because our organisational philosophy is that we work for people on their terms at their pace and in their space ... That offer of, ‘Right, do you want off the streets tonight? If you do, I have a bed but the conditions of that are that you need to be in it by nine o’clock. You need to stay in it and then you need to comply and you need to meet with our worker’ ... Our experience is that [with] a lot of the people that we work with, it doesn’t work. (Senior representative, national homelessness organisation)

The potentially extreme nature of the deprivation imposed on those who fail to accept SSOs has generated a paradox which is a source of significant tension within the homelessness sector. On the one hand, the architects of NSNO castigate low threshold services such as soup runs and winter shelters for undermining SSO effectiveness because they continue to offer services to homeless people even when they have declined to accept a SSO (Johnsen & Jones, 2015). On the other hand, frontline workers issuing SSOs are referring non-compliers to those very same soup kitchens and night shelters to ensure that their essential living needs are met:

There are church shelters and ... volunteered services that are reaching out to people. That does, in a sense, undermine that single service [offer] as well, that people can get help, but what can we do? ... We can’t leave people just starving on the streets, we just can’t ... (Senior representative, national homelessness organisation)

In fact, some frontline workers only felt able to ‘live with’ the strictures of the highly conditional policies operated by their organization because of the existence of these alternative low threshold services locally. As one outreach worker explained:

There are so many other day services that people can access. I think I would feel differently about things if there weren’t, but where we are based there’s a lot of faith-based centres that people can access without any expectation around change. For me, that makes a really big difference. (Frontline practitioner, homelessness organisation)

Further to this, and echoing previous research on this subject (Johnsen & Jones, 2015), a number of homeless interviewees expressed bewilderment regarding what they perceived as the ‘non-sensical’ rigid interpretation of ‘local connection’ criteria⁵ and/or extreme dissatisfaction with the type or quality of support offered. Most considered SSOs highly unjust as a consequence:

I was born five minutes up the road ... And yet I had no local connection when I came back [after living away]. My connection is here, do you know what I mean? (Homeless person, male, 34)

That’s [an SSO is] blackmail. Because some people just can’t physically do it ... If I’d been put in one of the bigger hostels, forced to go in there ... I’d end up flipping and either battering the shit out of someone or just walking out anyway. (Homeless person, male 30)

[SSOs are] out of order basically ... Some hostels are terrible places. One hundred and fifty drug addicts and alcoholics and you’re trying to sort yourself out and they move you into an environment like that, do you know what I mean? (Homeless person, male, 43)

Bargaining

Bargaining seeks to impact behaviour via ‘the use or promise of an exchange of gains or losses’ (Grant, 2006, p. 32). While this mode of power shares some characteristics with coercion, it is distinctive in two key senses: first, bargaining may involve potential gains (incentives) as well as losses (disincentives); and second, the losses, and their consequences, are less extreme in bargaining than those implied in coercion (see above).

The nascent counter trend towards less conditional approaches for the subgroup of homeless people with the very most complex needs, as noted above, is highly relevant here. This reflects a broader policy shift toward ‘personalisation’ in adult social care which aims to give people who require support greater choice and control over the services they receive (DoH, 2007), together with an acknowledgement of the limited effectiveness of mainstream homelessness services in supporting this client group more specifically (Adamson *et al.*, 2015; Terry & Cardwell, 2015). Commitment to developing flexible personalized approaches which enable long-term rough sleepers to engage with street outreach and other services more ‘on their own terms’ was expressed in Communities and Local Government’s ‘No One Left Out’ rough sleeping strategy in 2008 (CLG, 2008). Some of the pilot programmes emerging from this – ‘personalised budgets’ in particular – might be interpreted as a form of bargaining.

Personalized budgets normally involve sums of up to a few thousand pounds and the support of a ‘broker’ to help so-called entrenched rough sleepers develop a plan for their expenditure (Blackender & Prestidge, 2014; Brown, 2013; Hough & Rice, 2010). The money can (theoretically) be spent on anything that might act as a catalyst for recipients to move into accommodation (Teixeira, 2010), with some recipients electing to spend it on items such as mobile phones, toiletries, furniture, housing costs, transport, or entertainment technology, amongst others (Brown, 2013; Hough & Rice, 2010). A personalized budget might thus be regarded as form of leverage aiming to entice ‘service resistant’ rough sleepers to move into accommodation, in the vein of ‘if you agree to work with us to move off the streets you can have this money to spend howsoever you wish’. A degree of commitment to appoint and work with a broker is required of recipients, but in return they are offered substantially greater choice and resource than is available to the majority of rough sleepers.

Such techniques have been welcomed in many quarters as offering potential solutions for at least some homeless people who service providers have hitherto found very difficult to help:

You're talking about ... that very, very small percentage of people for whom the system just doesn't work. So there are countless examples of excellent practice with excellent outcomes, personalised budgets for example, intensive support ... all of these put the person first and say, 'Right, okay, what can we do?' (Senior representative, national homelessness organisation)

Those [personalised budget] workers ... their work seem to be about advocacy on behalf of the individuals. That aspect seems to have made a difference to that group ... otherwise people do just bump around in the system for years on end. (Senior representative, national homelessness organisation)

That said, some service providers express concern that such interventions risk introducing a 'two-tier' system where one set of (less conditional and more flexible) rules applies to the most 'difficult' homeless people, but other (tougher, more coercive) rules to everyone else, especially to those 'new' rough sleepers subject to SSOs (see above). This, a number argue, raises questions of fairness, and also, potentially, the risk of perverse incentives:

There is a small group of people ... that are basically given special treatment; the people they describe as 'service resistant' or 'entrenched rough sleepers' ... We continue to criminalise people when they really are just struggling to survive and making their needs more complex, and eventually when they are indeed in a very difficult position, then all of a sudden, we're offering them everything they want, ever needed. It's illogical. (Senior representative, national homelessness organisation)

Influence

Influence describes situations where behaviour change is secured in the absence of force or explicit threats of deprivation (Bachrach & Baratz, 1963). The two key forms of influence considered here are 'persuasion' and 'nudge'. Persuasion involves the use of speech (or other symbols) to shape people's beliefs, judgements and/or conduct (Grant, 2006). Informed by a philosophy of so-called 'libertarian paternalism', nudge techniques seek to steer (rather than compel) behaviour by redesigning the 'choice architecture' or incentive framing of a situation (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008).

Techniques of persuasion have become increasingly evident in homelessness policy and practice in recent years. Most notably, street outreach has undergone a transformation from what has been described as a traditional 'ameliorative' approach to a more overtly 'assertive' approach which actively and persistently aims to challenge the mindsets and behaviours of rough sleepers (Fitzpatrick & Jones, 2005; Parsell, 2011; Randall & Brown, 2002). Under the directive of the Rough Sleeper Unit, established by the then Labour Government in 1999, for example, Contact and Assessment Teams (CATs) were charged with promoting a more assertive style 'that would "persuade", "encourage" or "help" rough sleepers to move into accommodation and "discourage" them from sleeping rough' (Phillips *et al.*, 2011, p. 25). In a similar vein, the 'Places of Change' (Hostels Capital Improvement Programme), launched in 2005, required hostel staff to adopt a much more proactive approach to moving people on from homelessness services to settled homes, jobs and/or training (Jones & Pleace, 2010).

This shift has been associated with the increased use of 'motivational interviewing' in support service delivery more broadly, wherein practitioners proactively attempt to persuade

clients to consider making changes, rather than non-directively explore options themselves (Miller and Rollnick, 2002; Wahab, 2005; Wain *et al.*, 2011). When using this approach, frontline workers aim to enhance clients' 'readiness to change'. They are intentionally directive in encouraging homeless people to engage with support and reduce the harms associated with rough sleeping and substance misuse, for example. Motivational interviewing is now widely employed in street outreach, supported hostels, 'professionalised' (publicly funded) day centre services (Homeless Link, 2008; Johnsen *et al.*, 2005a), and in Housing First projects (Pleace, 2016; Tsemberis, 2010).

As these persuasive techniques do not involve the explicit threat of deprivation (in the way SSOs do), they are more palatable to a wider cohort of service providers. For example, one national stakeholder explained that:

The services that I've observed ... that have been the most successful have been those where almost at every stage of where somebody is at there will be somebody ... reminding them of how things could be and what is on offer to help them to get there. For me that's what the persistent and assertive is about. So ... saying to them, 'Right, let's have that chat again. I know you told me where to go when I saw you in the park a couple of weeks ago. But let's look at where you're at now and where this is taking you. Let me remind you of what's on offer for you and how quickly we can get this in place'. (Senior representative, national homelessness organisation)

That said, such techniques are not devoid of risk, with some interviewees noting that there is potential for service users to disengage if they feel overly pressured:

The shortcomings of the more interventionist approach is that not everybody's able to sign up to it ... There are a lot of people who do get motivated, do want to change, do want to have more settled lives and will play that game ... For other people, it doesn't suit them ... and they'll walk, they'll walk rather than being told again. (Senior representative, homelessness organisation)

Homeless interviewees expressed divergent views on the effectiveness of persuasive techniques such as assertive outreach. For some, these enhanced receptivity to support and motivation to move off the street:

A lot of the street team ... encourage me to go inside, even the night shelter ... This time of year, look how cold it is at night, it's freezing cold ... They're just like 'You're better off inside than being on the street, you know, with your health issues. It's dangerous, you're at risk'. And they're right, they're right you know. (Homeless person, male, 34)

For others, they had little tangible influence on the level or nature of engagement with support or participation in street culture activities, in the short term at least:

My choice is to be on the streets ... You have to know what it is to be a nobody for you to ... make yourself a somebody ... I understand [why various people are trying to persuade me to come off the streets] but I just think I'm not in the dire situation as they make it out to be ... (Homeless person, male, 29)

Nudge mechanisms may be discerned in a number of responses to street homelessness. While some forms of defensive architecture forcibly exclude street homeless people as discussed above, others employ milder techniques of physical or auditory manipulation to render particular spaces less 'attractive'. Examples include installation of seating that it is awkward to lie on, playing music loudly overnight, or installation of metal studs (commonly known as 'anti-homeless spikes') in alcoves to make it difficult for people to bed down (Andreou, 2015; Atkinson & While, 2015; Durkin, 2015; UKCRP, 2014). Another nudge mechanism increasingly employed in England includes public campaigns that aim to reduce the incentive to beg by dissuading members of the public from giving directly

to individuals who ask passers-by for money. These typically emphasize the links between begging and substance misuse and/or assert that many people who beg may not be street homeless, though (now somewhat dated) evaluations of these initiatives tend to point to their ineffectiveness in changing the behaviour of either the public or those begging (Danczuk, 2000; Hermer, 1999).

Service provider and homeless interviewees highlighted risks associated with nudge techniques, including the potential for displacement associated with defensive architecture (see also above under discussion of force). Moreover, their critiques often focused on the apparent prioritization of the interests of local residents and businesses over those of vulnerable members of the street population:

They just want you away up and gone. You're not their problem anymore, do you know what I mean? ... You just have to walk about for a bit until you find another spot. You get to know where you're not going to be bothered ... Sorry to swear, it's just being cuntish isn't it, you know what I mean? It is preying on specific kinds of people. (Homeless person, male, 43)

What are their [politicians'] ulterior motives? They want things spic and span so they can go back to the constituency and say 'we're doing a good job, we're cleaning up'. (Homeless person, male, 66)

Tolerance

The final category in the typology, tolerance, might be defined as the absence of any active or deliberate attempt to secure behavioural change. Tolerant approaches are consistent with the presence of a *desire* on the part of service providers for behavioural change amongst service users, but key here is that no attempt is made to actively force, coerce or influence their behaviour. Such an approach is characteristic of many traditional low threshold night shelters, soup runs, soup kitchens, and also some day centres (Johnsen *et al.*, 2005a, 2005b; Lane & Power, 2009; May *et al.*, 2006). These (predominantly but not exclusively faith-based) services tend to adopt an 'unconditional' open-door approach, which aims to welcome all regardless of their personal circumstances and hold no expectation, even if they may still 'hope', that service users will engage with support services and/or alter their lifestyle (Clope *et al.*, 2005; Johnsen, 2014). Most aim to foster a therapeutic environment or 'sanctuary' (Bowpitt *et al.*, 2013) which avoids 'pressuring' homeless people to alter their behaviour, but rather focuses on supporting them to change if and when they self-identify as being ready to do so.

This sort of approach is viewed very positively by many service users, who perceive it to be a tangible expression of respectful care on the part of service providers (see also Clope *et al.*, 2010):

They offered me clothes, sleeping bag, blankets ... And even just the staff, do you know what I mean? ... They were there for me at the time and they got really friendly, really relaxed and just kind of made me feel ... I suppose normal again. (Homeless person, male, 35)

I found somebody that cared. Genuinely. They'll come and have a chat with you. (Homeless person, male, 34)

That said, a number acknowledged that the open door policy adopted by such organizations brought with it the inevitability of services being patronized by people who were very difficult to share a space with. Some were highly fearful of low threshold services as a consequence:

I won't go in [name of service] if someone paid me a million pound a day because it is just chock full of druggies and alchies ... They'd offered me time again to put me in the night shelter and I just said 'No'. Like I say, I'd rather stay on the street. (Homeless person, male, 30)

It's chaotic in there [the night shelter]. You're trying to sleep and there are people fighting and drinking and all sorts going on. (Homeless person, male, 46)

Echoing long-standing debates within the homelessness sector more generally (Lane & Power, 2009; Randall & Brown, 2002; Shelter, 2005; Watts *et al.*, 2017), service provider interviewee opinion was very divided regarding tolerant approaches. Some firmly believe that these foster the therapeutic conditions necessary for recovery from trauma and addiction; others, that they are irresponsible for failing to challenge, and can even foster, highly damaging lifestyles (see also Johnsen *et al.* [under review] on this issue). One national stakeholder articulated this dilemma as follows:

There is ... ongoing debate about to what extent are the soup kitchens a harm reduction function and actually producing what is essentially emergency aid to people and therefore of some benefit? But also to what extent are they complicit in sustaining street lifestyles and street activity by taking out of people's hands the choice of, 'Alright, I've got limited resources. Do I buy another few bags of gear [illicit drugs] or do I buy some food? Well, if I know I can get free food seven days a week I don't have to decide anymore'. (Senior representative, national homelessness organisation)

Concluding reflections

This typology of social control interventions is proposed as a means of clarifying and structuring commentary in the contentious policy arena of street homelessness. It is hoped that it may provide an aid to lucidity, acting as a useful 'reference frame' (Busch-Geertsema *et al.*, 2016) which will help obviate the danger of stakeholders 'talking past' each other about qualitatively distinct interventions in a debate that is prone to both conceptual conflation and emotive obfuscation. In taking a comprehensive approach, we have sought not to offer a detailed evaluation of specific interventions, nor a definitive conclusion as to their ethicality (on which topic see instead Watts *et al.* (2017)). Rather, the aim has been to illuminate the perspectives of those closest to the realities, and the ambiguities, of the measures identified.

What the analysis presented reveals is that, perhaps counterintuitively, the use of force – the strongest form of social control – is in many instances considered acceptable by both service providers and homeless people themselves, especially where street lifestyles are visiting demonstrable harm on other people. On the other hand, coercive interventions such as SSOs, though representing an ostensibly 'weaker' form of control, given the absence of any actual physical restraint, provoke a more consistently anxious response. Interestingly, even the term coercion appears to carry more pejorative overtones than that of force, possibly because of its 'manipulative' connotations (see also Grant, 2006). Certainly, the penalties potentially imposed for failing to adhere to conduct requirements as implemented via some coercive measures – including absolute destitution and the denial of essential forms of support to highly vulnerable individuals – can be so serious that these anxieties are entirely understandable.

As one might expect, the deployment of persuasive techniques, such as assertive outreach, are less contentious than forceful or coercive interventions, but these are still not viewed as risk free given the potential to alienate some homeless people who may feel overly pressured.

Exerting influence via nudge techniques, especially the use of ‘defensive architecture’ to dissuade homeless people from bedding down, is controversial (mainly on ‘who benefits?’ grounds), but provokes perhaps less ire amongst both homeless people and service providers than media coverage would indicate (see for example Logan, 2014; Withnall, 2014). The use of bargaining techniques, such as personalized budgets, with the most ‘service resistant’ rough sleepers have for the most part been welcomed by service providers, but for some raise questions of fairness and perverse incentives. Finally, tolerant approaches are far from uncontroversial, given long-standing concerns that they can encourage street lifestyles and undermine efforts to end homelessness.

In short, the deployment of every one of these modes of social control, and indeed the absence of such controls, raise moral and practical dilemmas, the nuance of which is often unacknowledged in current academic accounts. By examining service provider and homeless people’s perspectives on these varying means of exercising social control, we have been able to shine a light not only on their nature and diversity, but also on their interrelationship and the ‘permeability’ of particular boundaries within our proposed typology. Defensive architecture, for instance, may be considered a force-based mechanism or an example of influencing via nudge, depending on whether the option to bed down is removed or simply made (much) more difficult. Moreover, in practice, particular programmes of interventions may contain elements of more than one of the modes of social control mapped above. The ‘RS205’ initiative developed in London in 2009 for example – so-called because it targeted the 205 (known) most ‘difficult to reach’ rough sleepers in the capital – included elements of *persuasion* (assertive outreach), *bargaining* (personalized budgets) and, if/when these techniques did not elicit the desired response, *force* (arrest or ASBO) (Teixeira, 2010). Similarly, Housing First projects which provide rapid access to independent housing with wraparound support to homeless people with complex needs (Homeless Link, 2016; Pleace, 2016; Tsemberis, 2010) arguably represent a meld of: *persuasion*, wherein staff proactively motivate clients to progress through the stages of recovery from addiction; *bargaining*, this being the ‘immediate’ offer of an independent tenancy direct from the street thereby negating the need for a prolonged hostel stay; and *tolerance*, that is, provision of long-term support which is not conditional on engagement with treatment plans (Tsemberis, 2010). Previous research has also demonstrated that frontline workers may oscillate between ‘therapeutic’ and ‘disciplining’ methods given the challenges they are faced with in the course of their day-to-day work (Dobson, 2011). These complexities do not, to our mind, negate the relevance of a clear conceptual framework within which to consider the meaning, impact and ethical implications of these distinctive mechanisms of control. On the contrary, they reinforce the need for a durable tool that can provide a consistent starting point for deconstructing and making sense of these subtleties.

While the practical examples used in the paper have all been rooted in the English context, we would contend that the typology itself is equally applicable to other countries of the Global North with targeted street homelessness policies. The typology may also be relevant to the modes of power that frontline homelessness workers can be subject to, in that they may feel forced, coerced, persuaded or nudged to discontinue or adopt particular service delivery styles. In the present study, certainly, some support workers reported feeling that their employers had been ‘coerced into being more coercive’ given the risk of potential funding losses if they were seen to deviate from the tenor of policy in what is a highly competitive contract market.

This approach of deconstructing initiatives aimed at securing behavioural change into their component modes of operation in order to aid empirical and ethical scrutiny may offer analytical opportunities in other areas of housing and social policy. To demonstrate via one example from a closely cognate field, social tenants in England may now be increasingly forced (via fixed-term tenancies) or coerced (via the severe losses some suffered under the 'Bedroom Tax' reduction in their housing benefit) to vacate their properties, while some English social landlords have long since nudged their tenants towards healthier, more socially engaged and economically independent lives (see Fitzpatrick & Watts, 2017). This gives a flavour of the potentially broader applicability of the social control typology we have sought to present in this paper, beyond the immediate realm of street homelessness. We would hope that other scholars, within and beyond housing studies, may be able to bring other examples to bear that will finesse the power-based typology presented here, such that it might provide a stepping off point for normative interrogation of policies that are concerned, in one way or another, with behavioural change.

Notes

1. These were chosen based on the number of anti-homeless laws in a city has, the enforcement of those laws and severity of penalties related to them, as well as the general political climate towards homeless people, local advocate support for Meanest City designation, history of homeless criminalization measures, and the existence of pending or recently enacted criminalization legislation (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2006).
2. These were selected to offer insights into the implementation and experiences of welfare conditionality in differing geographic contexts. They included three Universal Credit (social security payment) pilot areas.
3. Prior to May 2016 only migrant rough sleepers who were failing to exercise their Treaty rights (that is those not studying, working, looking for employment or otherwise self-sufficient) were subject to administrative removal. After May 2016 any EEA national who was rough sleeping was at risk of administrative removal, regardless of whether they were otherwise exercising their Treaty rights (Home Office, 2016). Such removals are likely to be discontinued, however, given a High Court ruling in December 2017 that they are unlawful (FEANTSA, 2017).
4. Note that milder forms of defensive architecture may instead 'nudge' rather than 'force' homeless people to sleep rough elsewhere, as is discussed under the section on 'influence'.
5. Previous research (Johnsen & Jones, 2015) indicates that when assessing rough sleepers in areas employing SSOs, frontline workers tend to rigidly define 'local connection' using criteria suggested for statutory homelessness assessments in the *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities* (CLG, 2006). This states that a homeless person might be considered to have a local connection if s/he 'is, or in the past was, normally resident in the district' and suggests that 'a working definition of "normal residence" should be residence for at least 6 months in the area during the previous 12 months, or for not less than 3 years during the previous 5 year period' (CLG, 2006, p. 231).

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